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Black Employment in City Government, 1973-1980

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Peter K. Eisinger

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FOREWORD

The local public sector, because of its greater receptivity to minorities than the private sector, has been an important source of job opportunities for blacks. In fact, the emergence of a solid black middle class during this century can be attributed, at least in part, to increasing numbers of blacks securing employment in city governments, especially at the professional and managerial levels.

The extent to which blacks find jobs in city governments depends, however, on many factors in the local environment. In this study, Dr. Peter Eisinger examines recent trends in black employment in the governments of 40 cities across the country and how those trends were affected by local economic and social conditions and by black political influence. While black employment in city governments increased during the seventies for the cities as a whole, particularly at the upper levels, black employment patterns varied sharply from city to city.

Perhaps the most striking finding is the correlation between black political influence and black employment levels. We have long considered political influence and economic advancement to be closely tied; Dr. Eisinger's study confirms this relationship in one important sphere.

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1. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MUNICIPAL EMPLOYMENT

In the transition from a manufacturing to a post-industrial economy that has taken place in the nation's cities, public employment has emerged as a major component of the new urban economic base (Grosskopf 1981, p. 48). Not only has the public sector grown relative to other employment sectors, but it has grown in absolute terms as well, even in a decade marked by economic recession and growing public discontent over tax burdens. Between 1970 and 1980, the number of municipal jobs increased from 1.9 million to nearly 2.2 million (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1981, p. 307). In many growing cities, such as Houston, Texas, and Tulsa, Oklahoma, whose populations mushroomed, municipal jobs increased substantially over the decade; even in many cities with declining populations, such as Akron, Ohio; Atlanta, Georgia; and Indianapolis, Indiana, city workforces grew.

The growth of the municipal public sector, particularly in conjunction with the decline of manufacturing employment, has been especially significant in opening sources of employment for both skilled and unskilled blacks. Moreover, public employment promises minority groups not only raw numbers of jobs but also socioeconomic and political benefits less readily available through the private job labor market (see, for example, Viteritti 1979; Kranz 1976). The public sector is thought to make professional and managerial occupations available to members of disadvantaged minority groups at a rate substantially higher than that of the private economy. Richard Freeman, for example, has shown that public employment in general has offered black workers more white-collar job opportunities than has the private sector, and that in some places local government in particular has accounted for a disproportionate share of all black managerial jobs (1976, pp. 152-60).

Furthermore, research by Durden and Schwarz-Miller (1982) has shown that as the percentage of people employed by government in a given locality rises, income inequality in that

area declines. This is particularly true for local government employment. Heavy reliance by blacks on public-sector work may therefore contribute significantly toward equalizing black and white incomes.

Little effort has been made to study the class origins of high-level black civil servants, but a large proportion have probably risen above the class status of their parents by virtue of their opportunities in government work. The greater openness of the public sector than the private sector, and the rapid growth of professional occupations in the local civil service have made government employment a major factor in the formation and maintenance of a black middle class.

The public sector has historically served as an opportunity ladder for disadvantaged ethnic groups. In the nineteenth century, Irish Americans turned to government work in response to discrimination in the private sector, the availability of jobs in the expanding government, and the economic security such jobs offered (Dahl 1961; Shannon 1963; Clark 1975; Erie 1978). The same factors help to account historically for the early entry of blacks into the federal civil service after the passage of the Pendleton Act in 1883 (Van Riper 1957), and they offer a partial explanation for contemporary patterns of black employment. The greater range of opportunities for minorities in government work is reflected in the more favorable attitudes among young blacks than among whites toward careers in the public sector (Frederickson 1967; Barger 1976).

Heavy reliance on the public sector as a mobility route is not, of course, without its problems. Upward mobility is most likely when the public sector is stable or expanding in size. But in periods of prolonged economic difficulty, local governments tend to reduce their payrolls, and members of the new black middle class may find themselves particularly vulnerable to such contraction.

Employment of blacks at middle and high levels of the public bureaucracy is thought to bring a degree of political power as well as socioeconomic progress. Scholars have long agreed that the process of public administration is inherently political (Sayre 1958), and Dahrendorf has gone so far as to suggest that bureaucrats who participate in the exercise of authority may be regarded as part of the "ruling class" (1959, p. 56). Specifically, the power that attaches to bureaucratic roles takes the form of ready access to and influence over elected policy makers; the collection, analysis, and management of information upon which elected officials often rely; participation in the agenda-setting process; and the interpretation and adaptation of the law at the stage of implementation. Such power is characteristic not only of high-level bureaucratic actors but also of middle-range managers and officials. "Street-level bureaucrats," such as police officers and welfare workers, may also hold these powers, particularly in

the cities; their discretionary judgments often decisively shape the quality of municipal services (Lipsky 1980).

The opportunities for socioeconomic advancement and administrative power through civil service employment are important for both individual workers and the minority group as a whole. For example, the development of civic and political leadership in the history of an ethnic or racial group is thought to be the product, in part, of the emergence of a middle class (Dahl 1961). Not all community leaders belong to the middle class, but many of them are likely to possess middle-class attributes, which afford the personal resources and managerial and organizational skills helpful in the performance of leadership roles. By contributing to the development of a black middle class and by teaching managerial skills, local government employment may play a role in the creation of a black leadership cadre.

The presence of black workers in responsible positions in the city bureaucracy may also have direct political implications for the black community. As racial or ethnic symmetry between the bureaucracy and its clientele increases, the administration of public policy may become more responsive to minority demands and concerns (Lopez-Lee 1979; Nachmias and Rosenbloom 1978). Minority bureaucrats may act as advocates and guardians for their own group's interests and they will probably heighten the racial sensitivity of their nonminority colleagues.

Although theories of representative bureaucracy remain largely unproven (Rosenbloom 1979), some modest evidence suggests that patterns of administration tend to change with the ethnic composition of the bureaucracy (Rosenbloom and Featherstonhaugh 1977; Jacobs and Cohen 1978). Others, however, imply that the effects of ethnic representation in the bureaucracy are essentially symbolic (Lowi 1964) or point out the limited capacities of minority administrators to respond to the exaggerated expectations of their coethnic constituencies (Herbert 1982).

The study of the public sector as a setting for economic, social, and political advances for minority groups in contemporary cities is in its early stages. Many of the implications and advantages claimed for civil service work are unproven and even unexplored. But clearly, work in local government offers great potential benefits for minority groups, and this potential justifies efforts to monitor trends in black employment and to explore the conditions of employment growth.

Data and Methodology

Black employment data are compiled by individual cities under the terms of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of

1972 and are sent annually to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in Washington, D.C. Such data are part of a comprehensive breakdown of each city's workforce by race, sex, functional category, occupational status, and salary. Since the EEOC is forbidden to release these data except as national aggregates, individual city data must be collected from the personnel departments of the cities themselves. Figures on black employment were gathered for 1973 (the baseline year), 1978, and 1980 (see Appendix A).

Some important limitations of the employment data should be noted. Part-time and provisional workers are not included, and neither are employees appointed by the chief executive and serving at his or her pleasure. Appointed personnel never appear in the affirmative action reports (EEO-4 forms), and part-timers and provisionals are normally recorded separately, if at all.

Since public education is almost never a municipal government function, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission does not require data on school personnel from city governments. Education is, of course, a major arena in which black employment advances have been made, but that function requires entirely separate analysis (see, for example, Meier and England 1982). Thus education personnel are not included in this study.

Also excluded from the investigation are CETA workers. Although the EEOC did require cities to tabulate the racial composition of its public-sector CETA workers when the program was in effect, that breakdown was reported separately from that of full-time, regular employees. CETA hiring was not done by regular merit procedures, nor was it designed as a channel to full-time city employment. Thus racial patterns in CETA hiring also require separate analysis.

Finally, in some cities--perhaps a dozen--the employees of nonmayoral agencies (those with authority independent of the chief executive) are not included in EEO-4 reports. These workers seldom account for more than 10 to 15 percent of the total city workforce.

In general, the data provided by each city for this study represent the best available census of all full-time employees in agencies ranging from financial administration to police and fire, from streets to parks and recreation, from housing and community development to sanitation and corrections, among others.

This analysis is based on data from a sample of 40 cities (see Appendix B). The 40 cities represent all those that met two criteria in a preliminary sampling: they had populations that were more than 10 percent black in 1970, and they were able to supply employment data, at least for their full-time workforce,

for all three years requested. Twenty-six of the cities had populations greater than 250,000; the remaining 14 cities had populations between 50,000 and 249,999.

The mean 1980 population of the cities was 555,175. The smallest city is East St. Louis, Illinois, with 55,200 people; the largest is Chicago, with slightly over 3 million. City size is not an important factor in this analysis: it is not significantly correlated with any of the variables used, either in the multiple regressions or in any bivariate relationship.

The 40 cities represent 14 percent of all cities in the United States with populations over 50,000. The full sampling procedure is described in Appendix A. It should be clearly understood that the group of 40 cities does not represent a random sample. Nevertheless, inspection of the list of cities studied suggests that the findings can probably be generalized to the universe of large cities with significant black populations, for most of them are included in the analysis.

As might be expected, the racial composition of the sample cities is different from the national urban pattern: the combined population of the sample cities in 1980 was 32.2 percent black, though the combined population of the central cities in the 323 Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas was 22.5 percent black (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1982, p. 49). The 40 cities were, on average, 33.3 percent black. Twenty-three of the cities are located in the South, Southwest, and California. The remaining 17 are located mainly in the Northeast and Great Lakes regions and constitute the frostbelt category in the analyses that follow.

2. TRENDS IN BLACK MUNICIPAL EMPLOYMENT, 1973-1980

There are at least three ways of measuring changes in black employment over the decade of the 1970s. One is to plot the actual growth or decline in the number of jobs held by blacks. A second is to measure changes in the percentage of jobs held by black workers, a figure that can be independent of the number of jobs. A third way is to figure the proportion of jobs held by blacks as a ratio of their fair share. The fair share effort score is calculated by dividing the percentage of blacks in the workforce or in a particular occupational category by the percentage of blacks in the population of the city. A fair-share effort score of 1.00 (rendered 100 in this study) indicates exactly proportional representation. Scores above or below 100 indicate over- or underrepresentation.

In 1973, the first year in which local governments were required to report to the EEOC, there were an estimated 100,796 municipal jobs held by black workers in the 40 sample cities (Table 1). This figure was reached by multiplying, for each city, the percentage of blacks in the workforce by the total number of city jobs and then adding the products together. Over the course of the entire decade blacks registered a clear net gain in city jobs: by 1980 the total had increased to approximately 110,207, up 9,411, for a gain of 9.3 percent. This gain occurred during a period when the total number of municipal jobs in these cities was shrinking. Between 1973 and 1980 nearly 25,000 city jobs were lost, a decline of 7.1 percent.

In fact, black city employment reached a peak in 1978, at an estimated 120,849 jobs, and took a precipitous plunge thereafter. Though black city employment had risen 19.9 percent between 1973 and 1978, more than half of that increase was wiped out in the next two years. (Note that these losses involved regular, full-time city jobs and not the federally funded positions lost through the termination of the countercyclical CETA public service employment program.) The number of city jobs held by blacks decreased between 1978 and 1980 in 28 of the 40 cities.

Table 1. Aggregate trends in black municipal employment, 1973-1980.

	1973	1978	1980
Numerical Trends			
Estimated total number of city jobs held by blacks	100,796	120,849	110,207
Proportional Trends			
Average percentage of blacks in total municipal workforce	27.5	32.4	32.6
Average percentage of blacks in administrator category	9.1	14.1	15.5
Average percentage of blacks in professional category	11.5	16.9	19.1
Fair-Share Trends*			
Average effort score for total municipal workforce	107.4	-	104.8
Average effort score for administrators**	33.2	-	46.6
Average effort score for professionals***	40.2	-	54.9

* A fair-share score of 100 indicates black representation in the municipal workforce in exact proportion to the percentage of blacks in the population.

** 1973 data available for 34 cities only.

*** 1973 data available for 35 cities only.

As we shall see at various points in the analysis, however, black workers did not bear a disproportionate burden of the job cuts made during this period. This is evident from the fact that the proportion of blacks in the workforce of the 40 cities grew slightly between 1978 and 1980, indicating that a small extra burden was in fact borne by workers of other racial groups.

Until 1978 the rate of growth in black employment exceeded the rate of black population increase. By the end of the decade, however, the average rate of black population growth in these 40 cities was 17.7 percent for the 1970-80 period, while the overall growth in black municipal employment was only 9.3 percent.

Despite the heavy losses after 1978, most cities ended the decade with more blacks on the regular city payrolls than had been there in 1973. Between 1973 and 1980 the number of jobs held by blacks declined in only 11 cities. Cuts were especially severe in Cincinnati, Philadelphia, and Rochester, New York. The percentage of jobs held by blacks, however, actually increased in four of the 11 cities, indicating that in those places white workers also lost jobs--and in greater proportions than blacks.

In the aggregate, the proportion of blacks among the employees of the 40-city sample grew throughout the 1970s, as we have already observed. In 1973 blacks made up, on the average, 27.5 percent of the workforces of the sample cities. By 1980 the proportion had risen to an average of 32.6 percent. The same general pattern of growth occurs within the highest paid and most prestigious occupational categories. The percentage of blacks among civil service administrators and managers went from an average of 9.1 percent in 1973 to 15.5 percent by 1980, while black professionals, who comprised, on the average, 11.5 percent of professional city workers in 1973, accounted for 19.1 percent by 1980.

However, patterns of growth in these two latter categories diverge from that in the workforce as a whole after 1978. Growth in the proportion of all city workers who were black was neglible, but black opportunities for high-level, white-collar city work continued to expand through the end of the decade. Most of the losses of black jobs between 1978 and 1980 therefore involved low-skilled workers.

A third way of assessing trends in black employment is to examine the fair-share effort ratio, which can be derived by dividing the percentage of black city employees by the percentage of blacks in the city population as a whole. (An alternative method of calculating fair-share is to divide the percentage of black city workers by the percentage of blacks in the city's labor force as a whole, but complete census figures, which normally report such data, had not yet been published by the Census Bureau when this study went to press.) The virtue of

the fair-share effort index is that it measures real gains. When ratios from the beginning and the end of the decade are compared, they show changes beyond those that might simply be functions of black population increases. The effort scores in Table 1 are sample averages. The 1973 scores for each city were calculated using 1970 census data, and the 1980 scores are based on the 1980 census. Fair-share effort scores cannot be calculated with any confidence for any intermediate year in the absence of mid-decade census figures.

Looking first at the aggregate workforce, we find that at both ends of the decade blacks were on the average slightly overrepresented in municipal employment. Between 1970 and 1980, however, black workers had lost ground proportionally. That is, in proportion to the black population as a whole, black municipal employment in these cities was slightly lower at the beginning of the 1980s than it had been in 1973.

A high concentration of minority workers in lower-level municipal jobs accounts for black overrepresentation in city employment. This may be inferred from the figures showing substantial underrepresentation of blacks in the administrator and professional categories. In these high-level groups, however, black fair-share representation rose substantially between 1973 and 1980, even while black representation in the total workforce was declining.

These data suggest, then, that the structure of opportunities for black workers in the public sector changed over the last decade, bringing about a transformation within the black municipal workforce. While the black share of jobs had become relatively stable by 1980, the black workforce was becoming increasingly managerial and professional. The rise in the administrator and professional fair-share effort scores and the slight decline in the fair-share effort score for the workforce as a whole thus indicates that a much smaller proportion of the low-skilled black labor pool was finding work with the cities than had been the case in 1973. Skilled black white-collar workers, however, were being absorbed by city bureaucracies at an accelerating pace.

The aggregate patterns of growth, stability, and decline shown in Table 1 mask some extreme variations among the sample cities (see Table 2). For example, between 1973 and 1980, changes in the proportion of blacks in the city workforces ranged from an increase of 35.1 percentage points in Birmingham, Alabama, to a decrease of 10.7 points in Beaumont, Texas. The range for gains and losses in fair-share effort are even greater. Oklahoma City, for example, increased its fair-share score in the administrator category by 127 points, while on the other end of the spectrum, Indianapolis lost 47 points. Among the 17 cities where fair-share

Table 2. Trends in black municipal employment, 1973-1980.

City	Total workforce				Administrators				Professionals			
	% black 1980	% point change 1973-80	Fair-share 1980*	Change 1973-80	% black 1980	% point change 1973-80	Fair-share 1980*	Change 1973-80	% black 1980	% point change 1973-80	Fair-share 1980*	Change 1973-80
Akron, OH	20.8	6.8	93	14	4.2	- 1.2	19	-12	7.7	- 3.6	35	-28
Atlanta, GA	60.7	19.2	91	10	35.0	—	53	—	47.2	27.6	71	34
Austin, TX	18.5	1.3	152	9	6.4	5.8	53	48	6.5	0.7	54	5
Beaumont, TX	38.3	-10.7	105	-53	8.2	3.2	22	6	9.2	9.1	25	22
Berkeley, CA	38.0	5.1	187	50	31.1	10.1	153	65	30.9	4.1	152	38
Birmingham, AL	41.1	35.1	74	54	7.9	—	14	—	17.9	—	32	—
Bridgeport, CT	16.3	2.3	77	-11	1.9	- 4.7	21	-20	4.5	2.9	21	11
Charlotte, NC	38.4	5.4	125	15	10.3	—	33	—	18.2	—	59	—
Chicago, IL	26.4	3.3	66	- 4	30.6	14.4	77	27	25.4	10.4	64	18
Cincinnati,OH	26.7	- 0.1	79	-20	7.1	0.9	21	- 2	11.1	2.5	33	3
Columbus, GA	38.4	- 1.5	112	-26	19.6	11.6	24	- 3	8.2	- 5.0	24	-22
Columbus, OH	25.0	3.4	113	- 1	13.6	5.4	62	19	13.3	4.0	60	11
Dallas, TX	20.3	2.5	69	- 2	7.4	4.9	25	15	8.9	5.1	30	15
Detroit, MI	55.2	10.1	88	-15	41.2	29.1	65	37	39.2	16.9	62	11
Durham, NC	37.8	- 1.0	80	-20	10.8	2.5	23	2	20.4	8.9	43	13
E. St. Louis, IL	83.7	3.1	88	13	87.1	40.1	91	23	82.4	22.4	86	- 1
Hampton, VA	34.8	3.4	101	-25	21.6	5.2	63	- 2	17.7	- 0.9	52	-21
Hartford, CT	20.2	3.2	60	- 1	6.6	5.8	19	16	25.1	17.1	74	52
Houston, TX	34.5	11.1	125	35	15.7	9.2	57	32	18.8	11.2	68	39
Indianapolis, IN	27.8	2.8	128	-11	15.0	- 7.0	69	-47	21.7	3.7	100	0

Table 2 (continued)

City	Total workforce				Administrators				Professionals			
	% black 1980	% point change 1973-80	Fair-share 1980*	Change 1973-80	% black 1980	% point change 1973-80	Fair-share 1980*	Change 1973-80	% black 1980	% point change 1973-80	Fair-share 1980*	Change 1973-80
Kansas City, MO	42.3	6.4	154	-26	12.0	--	44	--	22.8	--	83	--
Little Rock, AR	30.1	7.1	93	1	14.7	10.9	46	31	21.4	16.0	66	44
Los Angeles, CA	24.1	2.1	141	19	6.7	5.4	39	32	8.8	3.8	52	24
Memphis, TN	43.2	3.2	91	-12	5.8	- 7.2	12	-21	17.7	14.7	37	30
Miami, FL	28.6	5.0	114	11	8.1	6.5	32	25	10.3	9.4	41	37
Milwaukee, WI	16.1	2.4	70	-21	2.7	- 1.3	12	-15	7.1	1.1	31	- 9
New Orleans, LA	54.4	21.9	98	26	22.2	--	40	--	26.4	--	48	--
Norfolk, VA	40.7	- 1.3	116	-34	7.5	1.5	21	0	33.3	31.3	95	88
Oakland, CA	32.8	10.6	70	7	28.4	17.1	61	29	33.5	18.3	71	27
Oklahoma City, OK	19.6	2.6	134	28	18.9	18.6	129	127	8.7	4.0	60	31
Philadelphia, PA	40.4	- 1.4	107	-16	19.7	0	52	- 6	22.4	3.9	59	4
Pittsburgh, PA	20.4	5.4	85	10	0.5	0.2	4	2	0.9	0.6	4	2
Pontiac, MI	22.0	- 6.0	59	-46	20.0	3.0	53	-10	17.0	8.0	45	15
Raleigh, NC	36.4	1.7	133	-20	8.7	6.1	32	21	17.6	9.7	64	29
Rochester, NY	14.2	- 1.6	55	-38	5.6	- 1.5	28	-13	7.3	0.3	28	-13
St. Louis, MO	54.8	5.5	120	0	20.0	4.3	44	6	36.7	5.1	81	4
San Francisco, CA	22.0	0.2	175	7	8.0	--	63	--	6.5	--	52	--
Toledo, OH	16.6	0.6	95	-19	17.2	16.9	98	96	11.2	10.2	64	57
Tulsa, OK	18.4	- 0.7	153	-21	7.4	- 3.4	62	-36	5.9	-13.2	49	-25
Waco, TX	25.1	7.8	116	29	6.4	4	29	17	4.4	- 0.7	20	- 5

* A fair-share effort score of 100 indicates black representation in the municipal workforce in exact proportion to the percentage of blacks in the population.

scores for the total black workforce rose, the average number of points gained was 19.9; among the 22 cities where the scores fell, the average number of points lost was 20.1.

Table 3 shows that in quite a few cities, the percentage of workers who were black not only decreased in the workforces as a whole but also in the select occupational categories. Despite the overall growth during the period under study, the proportion of black city workers reached a peak in many places before the end of the decade, after which blacks in those cities began to lose ground.

Even within individual cities, the patterns of loss and gain are not always consistent for all occupational categories. In many places, blacks gained at the upper end of the occupational scale but lost ground in unskilled employment. Only 9 cities showed increases in fair-share effort between 1973 and 1980 for both the total workforce and the two select occupational categories. In 5 cities, fair-share effort decreased in all three areas. Most labor markets offered mixed opportunities.

We may summarize black municipal employment patterns during the decade by noting that the entire period saw a general growth in black jobs, although the trend began to turn at the end of the eighties. Overall growth did not occur in all cities and in the aggregate, growth in black municipal employment did not keep pace with black population increases in those years.

When we examine black fortunes in the select occupational categories, we find that a disproportionate share of the growth occurred here, indicating a steady upgrading and professionalization of the pool of black municipal employees.

Finally, it is important to note the leveling off of the black share of jobs after 1978 and, indeed, the sharply increased number of cities in which blacks actually experienced losses after that year.

In the following sections we shall attempt to explain some of the sources of these aggregate shifts, as well as the sources of the variations among cities.

Table 3. Number of cities showing downward trends in black municipal employment, 1973-1980 and 1978-1980.

	1973-80	1978-80
Percentage black		
Total workforce	9	20
Administrators	7*	18**
Professionals	9*	15**
Fair-share effort score		
Total workforce	22	--
Administrators	11*	--
Professionals	8*	--

* 1973 data not available for 6 cities.

** 1978 data not available for 3 cities.

3. EXPLAINING BLACK EMPLOYMENT GROWTH: SOME HYPOTHESES

The size and functional composition of a city's public workforce are products of both local and external economic, fiscal, and political factors. Just as these factors shape the workforce in general, so may they be expected to influence its racial makeup. This chapter offers several hypotheses to explain changes in black employment levels in municipal government. Later sections are devoted to empirical analyses of the hypotheses.

The Labor Market Hypothesis: Increases in black public employment are a function of increases in the black labor pool.

The proportion of blacks in a city's workforce is related to the percentage of blacks in the city's population (Dye and Renick 1981; Eisinger 1982). One explanation for this relationship is that the municipality as employer absorbs different demographic segments of the labor force more or less in proportion to their presence in the population. This would be a particularly plausible explanation where there are many low-skill jobs in the labor market, and many low-skilled workers of all the constituent demographic groups. Such a situation characterizes municipal governments in central cities with large black populations.

According to the labor-market hypothesis in its purest form, proportional representation of blacks in a city's workforce occurs when the city hires available labor without making any distinction in favor of or against any racial group. Such an explanation has been offered by Krislov (1967, p. 125) to account for the high concentration of black workers in the federal government in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

The Economic Conditions Hypothesis: Levels of black employment will vary positively with the health of the local private sector economy.

Plant closings, regional and international competition for labor and capital, foreign industrial competition, and inflation have all made their impact felt on municipal treasuries. Where the local economy is in a state of crisis or deterioration, more people are dependent on government assistance, fewer people are paying taxes, and taxable resources decline in value.

Just as public expenditures tend to rise with increases in per capita income (Burkhead and Grosskopf 1980, p. 23), so are they likely to decline in a period of economic distress. The city's workforce, whose wages account for the bulk of municipal expenditures, is the most likely target for contraction in response to revenue decreases. Black public-sector workers are likely to be especially vulnerable in such situations, for employment cuts will normally affect those with the lowest seniority and those who fill menial jobs (Gill 1980; Rosenbloom 1979).

The case of New York City is instructive. An analysis by the New York City Commission on Human Rights (1976) of 38,000 job "separations" (losses of jobs due to layoffs, attrition, cessation of externally funded programs, and terminations) showed that blacks bore a disproportionate burden of the retrenchment. While white workers lost 22 percent of their number over a sixteen-month period beginning in 1974, blacks lost 35 percent of their number. Nearly three-quarters of all job separations occurred in clerical, paraprofessional, and maintenance occupations, where blacks were substantially overrepresented.

The Federal Aid Hypothesis: The black share of municipal jobs will tend to vary with the amount of federal aid received by the city.

A chief rationale for federal grants-in-aid to cities and states is that the central government's fiscal powers can be used to stimulate state and local spending (Gramlich 1977; Bahl, Johnson, and Wasylenko 1980). Labor market economists have in fact found that the major effect of federal grants to state and local governments is to increase their spending on personnel (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 1977; Ashenfelter 1977). The effect, moreover, is manifested in larger state and local workforces rather than higher wages or benefits.

The pattern of federal aid to cities during the 1960s and 1970s warrants the proposition that grant fluctuations are likely to be linked to black employment levels. The great growth of federal grants coincided with the growth of the civil rights movement and the attendant pressures for effective affirmative action in city employment (P. Peterson 1981, p. 160). Aid increases during these decades came particularly in areas in which black employees are now concentrated, such as social

services, community development and housing, and employment services. The period also saw the introduction of general revenue sharing; many cities used these unearmarked funds for payroll expenses. In contrast, municipal functions that have not been particularly dependent on federal grants, such as police and fire protection and general administration, are areas in which blacks are not well represented.

If federal aid growth is associated with increases in black employment, then aid decreases may result in black job losses. Federal aid to local governments, measured as a proportion of local budgets, reached a peak in 1978 (Reischauer 1981). Real per capita spending by local governments decreased in the last years of the decade (G. Peterson 1982, p. 160).

The fall-off in federal aid and declining per capita expenditures at the municipal level were in some measure a function of the phasing out of countercyclical aid at the midpoint of the Carter presidency. Countercyclical assistance, begun in 1975, channeled funds to cities with high unemployment. The purpose of this effort, especially during the early Carter years, was to help cities maintain public services and save public-sector jobs without raising taxes (Congressional Quarterly 1981, p. 277). Congress allowed countercyclical aid to lapse after 1978, however, and this action was the major cause of the federal funding slowdown before the Reagan presidency. It would be reasonable to suppose that such funding losses led to municipal cuts and that black workers, with their low seniority, suffered disproportionately.

The Black Political Power Hypothesis: The presence of a large black voting bloc and/or a black mayor will be associated strongly with black employment gains.

Translating local political power into government jobs is as old as the discovery of patronage. Historically, control of the public workforce has been an important means of ethnic advancement. Preferential hiring of coethnics on city government was a major factor, for example, in the economic development of Irish Americans in the nineteenth century.

With the increasing use of merit selection and civil service tenure provisions, however, the possibilities for patronage have declined. Can an ethnic group that is only now gaining political power use it to influence the ethnic composition of local public workforces, whose employees are currently selected by the apparently neutral processes of contemporary personnel administration?

Most observers agree that personnel administration, despite its reliance on merit principles, is an eminently political activity

(Thompson 1975). There are indeed several ways in which black mayors can influence municipal hiring and promotion practices so as to increase the number of black city workers and raise the proportion of blacks in positions of bureaucratic responsibility. The decision to fashion a serious affirmative action program and to oversee its implementation in the local civil service, for example, is made in large part in response to political considerations and pressures (Milward and Swanson 1979). Such considerations are likely to be regarded as both natural and obligatory in cities with black mayors.

Saltzstein (1983) has shown that over 90 percent of American cities now have affirmative action plans, but she points out that some have been in existence much longer than others. For example, as late as 1975, only 2 of 16 Southern cities surveyed by the Southern Regional Council had enacted such plans (New York Times, May 25, 1978). And the existence of an affirmative action plan is, of course, no guarantee that it will be implemented. Not until the election of a black mayor in Atlanta was an affirmative action officer appointed to a post that had been created but left empty under the previous white mayor (Eisinger 1980, p. 162). A 1976 survey of 32 public-sector employers, including cities, counties, hospitals, and educational institutions, found that though 73 percent had developed formal equal employment opportunity plans, only 50 percent had special recruiting programs for minorities, only 50 percent had changed their selection procedures for affirmative action purposes, and a mere 33 percent had appointed an affirmative action officer (Personnel Policies Forum 1976, pp. 2-15).

A study of the black mayors in Atlanta and Detroit found that the chief executives had effected a number of changes in personnel practices as a way of supporting their affirmative action goals (Eisinger 1980, pp. 159-63). These included vigorous recruiting efforts in black colleges and high schools, the modification of selection tests that were regarded as biased, and the creation of city-agency internships for black college students. Both mayors had also appointed black personnel directors. Thompson has shown (1978) that personnel administrators who are sympathetic to minorities are more likely to launch special efforts to recruit blacks and are more willing to endorse changes in hiring procedures to increase the number of minorities on the payroll. Finally, Saltzstein (1983) has argued on the basis of a nationwide survey of municipal personnel practices that where the office of affirmative action is directly under the control of the chief executive, rather than in the personnel department or under a quasi-independent civil service commission, equal employment efforts will be more effective.

Most mayors have no discretion in choosing the particular individuals to be hired for regular civil service positions. Many mayors have some appointive powers, but these are usually limited. In Detroit, for example, with more than 20,000 civil service employees hired on a merit basis, the mayor appoints fewer than 30 agency heads who serve at his pleasure. In Atlanta, with around 7,000 regular employees, the number of appointed agency or department heads is less than 40. Nevertheless, an agency head can influence both selection and promotion practices within his or her agency by choosing job candidates from the civil service list and by writing evaluations that lead to promotions. Since there is a clear and well-documented tendency for superiors to give higher ratings to subordinates from their own ethnic group (for a review of the literature see Johnson and Ronan 1979), the appointment of black agency heads can affect the racial composition of the bureaucracy and its key personnel over time.

More diffuse influences on the personnel process apparently emanate from a large black electorate. Using state-level data on black voter registration, Freeman shows in a series of regression equations that the greater the proportion of registered black voters in a state, the higher the proportion of blacks holding jobs in state and local government. Increases in black voter registration during the 1960-1970 period are also associated with increases in the black share of government jobs, even with a variety of other possible explanatory factors controlled (1976, pp. 168-73). Freeman concludes that "black voting power was a major element in the demand for black workers by state and local governments" (p. 173).

This analysis will update such findings, focusing exclusively on city employment, and will explore whether black power in city hall provides a counterforce to the potentially hurtful effects on black municipal employment of local economic and fiscal distress.

4. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND BLACK MUNICIPAL EMPLOYMENT

Perhaps the best indicator of the general state of a city's economy over the long run is its pattern of population growth and decline. As Levine has pointed out (1978, p. 318), population decline often parallels economic decline. A number of analysts have used population trends as a key indicator of urban health (O'Hare et. al 1982, p. 46). For example, urban growth and decline were regarded by the Carter administration's urban policy task force as the central factors underlying the condition of American cities (Urban Regional Planning Group 1978), and population loss is usually built into urban hardship or distress indexes (Dommel 1980, p. 471).

In the present study population loss is associated with high unemployment. In the 23 cities that lost population over the 1970s (see Appendix B), the average unemployment rate was 7.3 percent at the end of 1979 (1980 data were never published in full by the Bureau of Labor Statistics). Growing cities had an average unemployment rate of only 4.2 percent (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 1980). Population losses are characteristic of cities whose economies have long been reliant on heavy industry. In the 1970s obsolete manufacturing methods, low productivity, and high wage levels undercut the competitiveness of this economic sector in the world market. At the same time, consumer demand for durable goods began to diminish as inflation outran earnings. All this translated into a loss of jobs through business failure, contraction, or relocation.

Many skilled workers migrated from declining cities to high employment regions, leaving behind the low-skilled and immobile. Even as the city populations have declined, then, the proportion of the population dependent on public assistance and municipal services has risen.

Few cities in such circumstances have the resources to cope with job losses and the increase in dependency levels among their citizens. As the aggregate income of city residents goes down, so

do revenues from taxes, especially those related to earning and consumer spending such as sales, excise, and payroll taxes. Job losses also reduce state tax revenues, leading to cuts in levels of state assistance to local governments, as many Midwestern states discovered in the late 1970s. Local property tax revenues are also affected by the chain of economic events surrounding population losses. The loss of jobs and the economic hard times that follow bring residential, commercial, and industrial real estate abandonments, home mortgage foreclosures, and tax delinquency, all of which diminish a city's property tax receipts.

Not all cities are in such straitened circumstances, of course. A number of cities grew during the 1970s, most of them in the South and West. In the present sample, such places as Houston (with a 29 percent growth rate over the last decade), Oklahoma City (10 percent), Tulsa (10 percent), Austin (37 percent), Charlotte (30 percent), Raleigh (24 percent), and Little Rock (20 percent) were among the population boom towns. Unchecked growth is not an unmitigated good, but it is a sign of relative prosperity: population growth is closely related to the production of jobs in the private sector. Jobs mean purchasing power and tax revenues.

In short, population trends, which generally reflect the fortunes of the central-city economy, will eventually make themselves felt in the municipal treasury. Trends in the generation of local tax revenues will likely be reflected in the scope and variety of municipal services a city offers. Revenue decline or a decreasing rate of growth often leads a city to cut personnel. Although a few cities, such as Boston (New York Times, Nov. 2, 1982), have attempted to protect affirmative action gains in periods of retrenchment, the likelihood is that black workers will commonly suffer disproportionately.

Conversely, population growth leads to increased tax revenues and service demands, thereby stimulating public-sector growth. (In the present study, population increase over the last decade is indeed strongly related to growth in employment in the local public sector ($r = .65$, $p < .001$). Under conditions of prosperity members of socioeconomically disadvantaged groups are less likely to encounter sharp competition or resistance as they claim a fair share of public goods. Affirmative action policies, which may not be adopted readily under conditions of scarcity, are more likely to flourish in times of abundance. Thus we may hypothesize that private-sector prosperity, signalled by population growth, will eventually produce black job growth in the public sector.

To explore these hypotheses, we begin by examining a series of simple relationships, first between city population changes and black employment and then between public workforce growth or

contraction (theoretically an intervening variable) and black job levels.

Consider first the following data:

1. The actual number of public-sector jobs held by blacks grew by 6.2 percent between 1973 and 1980 in the 23 cities that lost total population during the decade; by 21 percent in the 17 cities that grew in population.

2. Among the 23 cities that lost population, 9 (39 percent) showed a numerical decrease in the 1973-80 period in black-held public-sector jobs. Among the 17 cities that grew, only 2 (12 percent) showed a loss of black-held jobs.

3. The 11 cities where the number of public-sector jobs held by blacks actually decreased had an average population loss over the decade of 11.2 percent. The 29 cities where the number of black-held jobs increased had an average population growth of 1.8 percent.

4. Among the 23 cities that lost population, the average number of black-held city jobs in 1980 was 3,397. This was substantially larger than the average number of black-held jobs in growing cities (2,010). However, the average increase since 1973 in the declining cities was 198, compared with an average increase in growing cities in the same period of 349.

Cities that gained population over the decade tend to have smaller proportions of black residents: the growth rate is negatively related ($r = -.37$, $p < .01$) to the percent black in the 1980 census. Let us recall that the larger the percentage of blacks in a city, the larger the percentage of blacks among city workers at any given time. Not surprisingly, then, population growth is negatively related, at modest levels, to both the rate of increase in the percentage of black municipal employees and the percentage of blacks among city workers in 1980, as the correlations show in the third column of Table 4. Black job gains measured in terms of change in the fair-share effort ratio, however, are positively related to city growth, although again the coefficients are small. The actual data show that these positive coefficients reflect slightly smaller declines in fair-share effort in growing cities than in declining ones.

These statistics suggest that competition among blacks for city jobs in increasingly black, declining cities is sharper than in cities where the black population is smaller and the population is growing. Even though the declining cities have more black jobs

Table 4. Correlations between population trends and black municipal employment.

	Percentage of blacks in city, 1980	Black population growth, 1970-80	City population growth, 1970-80
Change in percentage of blacks, 1973-80			
Total workforce	.64***	-.04	-.16
Administrators	.59***	-.01	-.07
Professionals	.64***	-.04	-.20
Change in fair-share effort score, 1973-80			
Total workforce	.04	-.25*	.16
Administrators	-.16	-.10	.21
Professionals	.01	-.11	.07
Percentage of blacks, 1980			
Total workforce	.86***	-.14	-.23*
Administrators	.74***	-.15	-.28**
Professionals	.85***	-.20	-.37**

Note: Coefficients are Pearson r.

*** $p < .001$
** $p < .01$
* $p < .05$

numerically--as well as a proportionally smaller white population with which to compete--the opportunity structure for black job seekers in growing cities is apparently more favorable. It seems reasonable to argue that this more favorable climate is a product of a relatively expansive local economy that both stimulates and reflects growth. Economic vitality fosters a psychology of abundance that makes possible a wider sharing of public goods.

To bolster the finding that black employment opportunities are related to the local economy, it is interesting to note that the fair-share effort ratio declined or grew much more slowly during the 1970s in cities that exhibited a high level of economic hardship as measured by the Nathan-Adams hardship index (1976). The measure is a composite rating, based on such 1970 census data as median income and the extent of poverty. It indicates the relative economic disadvantage of a central city vis-a-vis its suburbs. Only 24 of the 40 cities in the present sample are included in the Nathan-Adams list, but the results of the calculations using these cities are suggestive.

The hardship score is strongly negatively related to population growth during the 1970s ($r = -.54$, $p < .001$) and positively related to percent black in 1980 ($r = .42$, $p < .01$). Thus it comes as no surprise, given the foregoing analysis, that hardship and change in the fair-share effort ratio for the total workforce are inversely related ($r = -.50$, $p < .01$). Hardship is also negatively related to change in the effort score for blacks in administrator positions ($r = -.28$, $p < .05$) and professional jobs ($r = -.19$). In other words, blacks do poorly in proportion to their population in economically distressed cities. The hardship score, however, as we would expect, is positively related to percent black in the city workforce in 1980 ($r = .18$, .33, and .39 for percent black in the total municipal workforce, administrators, and professionals, respectively; the latter two coefficients are significant at the .05 level).

Public-Sector Retrenchment

Declining cities are said to offer an especially inhospitable opportunity setting for black city workers, as well as for blacks seeking jobs in the public sector. The conventional explanation for this is offered by the case-study literature. Economic troubles diminish tax resources, forcing city officials to reduce the size of the municipal workforce. Because black workers are low on the seniority ladder, they bear a disproportionate burden of the costs of contraction. Thomas's study (1978) of the Cincinnati retrenchment experience, for example, shows that through layoffs, 13 percent of black males lost their jobs,

compared to only 3.2 percent of white males. Thomas attributes this disparity to racial differences in seniority and to the concentration of blacks in street-level, labor-intensive agencies, such as sanitation, highway maintenance, and the police. Such agencies were regarded in Cincinnati, as in other cities, as more able to sustain personnel cuts than smaller departments with highly skilled workers (see also Pascal 1979; New York City Commission on Human Rights 1976).

According to the conventional explanation, therefore, we should see a causal sequence in which urban population decline is followed by workforce contraction, which results in a low proportion of black municipal jobs.

In the previous section, however, we saw that population decline was related to increases in the proportion of black employees on the city's payroll, just the opposite of what we would have expected from the case-study material. What processes are at work here? Can we still maintain that cities with deteriorating economies, signaled by declining populations, offer a less open opportunity structure for blacks if their share of jobs increases in such places?

To begin with, the initial step in the causal sequence seems to hold. Population growth was strongly related to expansion of the workforce between 1973 and 1980 ($r = .65$, $p < .001$). We have corroboration of the underlying logic of this relationship in the fact that cities that rank high on the Nathan-Adams hardship index tended to experience greater public-sector contraction ($r = -.42$, $p < .01$) than did cities that rank low. In cities that experienced workforce contraction, however, the proportion of blacks among their workers generally increased. Although cities that expanded their workforces also had increases over the decade in the proportion of blacks among city workers, these increases were not as large as those in the cities undergoing contraction. On the other hand, the fair-share effort ratio for blacks improved in cities where the workforce was expanding during the 1970s, while the ratio declined where the workforce shrank. In the two high prestige occupational categories, blacks made progress under conditions of both workforce expansion and contraction, but progress was marginally greater where the workforce was growing. The dimensions of all these patterns are shown in Table 5.

These findings are consistent with the analysis in the previous section regarding the relationship between population shifts and employment. The problem is that they contradict the case-study findings. How can the percent black increase while the workforce shrinks? The discrepancy between these findings and the case studies can be explained by the fact that the latter focus on extreme cases of urban fiscal stress. Circumstances in

Table 5. Changes in the public-sector workforce and black employment, 1973-1980.

	Cities where the workforce grew (N=21)	Cities where the workforce declined (N=18)
Average change in percentage of blacks		
Total workforce (r= -.07)	4.2	6.3
Administrators (r= -.22)	4.2	9.1
Professionals (r= -.16)	6.5	8.7
Average change in fair-share effort score		
Total workforce (r=.17)	1.9	-7.3
Administrators (r=.08)	16.6	13.9
Professionals (r=.04)	15.5	15.3

Notes: All figures are percentage points.

Coefficients measure the relationship of black employment change to public-sector workforce growth, 1973-80.

The total number of cities in this table is 39; Milwaukee is not included because the size of its workforce remained unchanged over the decade.

such cities call for drastic measures, namely, personnel layoffs. Since state and local laws require that employees be laid off in reverse order of seniority, blacks will be laid off in disproportionate numbers.

Most cities, however--even those experiencing some degree of economic deterioration--have not had to go so far as to lay off municipal employees. Workforce reductions through various forms of employee attrition have usually accomplished the necessary contraction.

Attrition cuts, accomplished by declining to fill vacancies created by retirements, deaths, and voluntary resignations, may in fact increase the black percentage of the workforce. Unlike layoffs, attrition cuts are most likely to eliminate the jobs of white employees. For example, positions opened by death or retirement will normally have been held by older workers, of whom a disproportionate number are white. It is even probable, given the greater likelihood of racial discrimination in the private sector, that most of those who leave the municipal public sector for other work will be white.

The present data do not allow us to distinguish, among the 18 cities whose workforces declined, those that accomplished their reductions mainly through attrition and those that did so principally through layoffs. Research on retrenchment strategies, however, suggests that layoffs constitute an extreme and unusual response. Levine and his colleagues (1981), for example, studied retrenchment in New York City, Oakland, Cincinnati, and Baltimore. They found that officials, faced with the need to shrink the public sector, tended to seek strategies that avoided conflict. Thus attrition cuts, widely dispersed, were greatly preferred to layoffs and were in fact the more common response to fiscal difficulty.

According to Levine, staff reductions in Baltimore were accomplished entirely by attrition. Even in New York City during the mid-1970s, "there were relatively few layoffs." Recent workforce reductions in St. Louis (New York Times, Oct. 1, 1982, p. A14), a city in dire economic straits, followed a similar pattern. The city relied predominantly on attrition rather than layoffs to eliminate jobs in 1981-82. Public employee unions in stricken cities have vigorously opposed layoffs. In Oakland, for example, the unions managed to get officials to agree in a memorandum of understanding "to practice reductions-in-force by attrition, insofar as possible", (Levine, Rubin, and Wolohojian 1981, pp. 68-9). An agreement with the unions of New York City specified reductions through attrition, and "the city adhered to this agreement almost completely for several years," (p.31).

In sum, the increase in the proportion of blacks among city employees in places where the workforce decreased is probably

attributable to the general reliance on attrition reductions rather than layoffs. Attrition cuts are likely to distribute the burden of contraction much differently, from a racial perspective, than layoffs do. Despite the increase in the percentage of workers in such cities who are black, however, we may still argue that black job seekers in those places face a relatively inhospitable opportunity structure. The actual number of black jobs declined in half of the 18 cities where the workforces shrank, while there were numerical losses of black jobs in only 2 of the 21 cities where the workforces increased. Even in the declining cities where the number of black jobs grew, blacks were either losing ground in relation to their population or not gaining as quickly as in cities where the public sector was growing.

Thus an increasingly black workforce, measured in terms of a growing percentage of workers who are black, masks what is in fact a more competitive labor market for black job seekers in the declining cities.

Public-Sector Changes, 1978-80

Although the workforces in 21 cities grew during the 1973-80 period, in 14 of those cities the number of city employees reached a peak around 1978 and declined thereafter. In all, 32 of the 40 cities lost employees between 1978 and 1980. Sustained growth through the end of the decade was relatively uncommon.

The drop in the number of regular city employees in this period can probably be attributed to the deteriorating national economy, as well as to the loss after 1978 of federal countercyclical aid in the form of antirecession fiscal assistance (ARFA, a part of the general revenue-sharing program).

Some cities suffered dramatic cuts in the size of their workforces during the last years of the decade. For example, although Memphis showed a slight overall gain in number of city workers between 1973 and 1980, the city decreased its workforce by more than 17 percent between 1978 and 1980. Akron, whose city workforce increased over the decade by 3.2 percent, lost 20.8 percent of its jobs in 1978-80. Oakland lost nearly 40 percent of its workers, Hartford lost more than 33 percent, and East St. Louis lost nearly 25 percent. The average loss among the 32 cities in the 1978 period was 12 percent.

In general, black municipal workers in these cities were affected no differently from white employees. Since the rate of workforce shrinkage was more drastic after 1978 than it was over the decade as a whole, blacks did not increase their total share of jobs in cities undergoing retrenchment, but neither did they suffer

unusually. The percentage of municipal workers who were black dropped in these 32 cities by an average of one-tenth of a point. Reductions in force in these years, in other words, were borne proportionally by the races. Black representation at the administrator and professional levels in the 32 cities actually increased slightly after 1978, by 2.1 and 2.4 percentage points, respectively. These gains were larger than those in cities whose workforces grew after 1978. Even cities that made extreme cuts in personnel showed only modest changes in the percentage of workers who were black. Hartford, for example, despite a loss of nearly one-third of its jobs, showed a gain of 1.8 percentage points after 1978 in black representation on its workforce. Oakland's loss of 40 percent of its workforce translated into a decline in the percentage of blacks from 36 to 33 percent, that is, only an 8 percent loss. In the absence of census data for 1978, we cannot calculate a fair-share effort ratio and therefore cannot measure shifts in black proportional representation over that brief period of time. We may guess, however, that there were at most very modest declines in fair-share effort.

We are able to conclude from these data that the very substantial cuts in municipal employment between 1978 and 1980 were apportioned equitably among the races, for the most part. Attrition strategies, layoffs that targeted agencies with relatively few blacks, or efforts to mitigate the racial impact of layoffs could all account for this pattern. In any case, it is apparent that although blacks lost a substantial number of jobs, they did not bear a greater burden in the cutbacks than did white workers.

5. OTHER FACTORS IN THE GROWTH OF BLACK MUNICIPAL EMPLOYMENT

The Labor-Market Explanation

Changes in employment levels, measured either as shifts in the percentage of blacks among city workers or in fair-share effort scores, do not appear to be merely artifacts of the labor market. While other studies have shown that the percent black of the population of a city is very strongly related to the percent black in the workforce at any point in time (see Table 4, first column), black employment gains have not been achieved simply because the number of blacks available to work has increased. If the labor-market hypothesis were entirely correct, there should be some correspondence between changes in the labor pool and changes in the composition of the employee ranks. That is, as black population as a proportion of the city population increases, then so should the proportion of blacks in the workforce.

Growth in the black percentage of a city's population between 1970 and 1980, however, is not at all related at the bivariate level to changes in the proportion of the city's workforce that was black. Furthermore, growth in the black population is negatively related to increases over the decade in the fair-share effort scores.

In short, although a large black population is related to a large share of city jobs, blacks have done slightly better, in relation to their population, in gaining municipal jobs in cities where the black population percentage did not increase or increased at a low rate over the 1970s. To put the matter another way, the black share of municipal jobs becomes smaller, as measured by the fair-share effort index, as the black population grows larger. The changing racial composition of the labor pool has not been reproduced faithfully in the patterns of change in the racial composition of the city workforce. Factors other than black population growth, evidently, must account for black job growth.

An additional bit of evidence that casts doubt on the primacy of a labor-market explanation for black employment patterns is that the educational level of the black labor pool is not related to the proportion of black managers and professionals in city jobs. Unfortunately, I could not calculate changes in black educational levels, because the 1980 census data on education by city had not been released at the time of this writing. Other studies, however, including one using the same data as this analysis, have found that black education, measured either as the 1970 percentage of blacks with college educations in the cities or as the median number of years of education among the black residents, does not correlate with the proportion of blacks in jobs calling for higher education or technical training (Eisinger 1982; Dye and Renick 1981; Sigelman and Karnig 1977). In other words, the education level of the labor force does not account for variations in employment in jobs requiring education.

A last bit of evidence that militates against a pure labor-market explanation is that black employment levels at any time and black employment growth are both related negatively to the presence of a municipal residency requirement for city employees (Eisinger 1982). Residency laws were revived in the 1970s as a way of trying to reserve city jobs for central-city workers (Eisinger 1983). Since job aspirants from outlying metropolitan or suburban areas are excluded from seeking city employment where residency laws exist, the labor pool from which the city draws its workers will tend to have a higher proportion of blacks than will the entire metropolitan labor pool. If employment patterns were entirely responsive to labor-market demographics, the percent black on a city's payroll should be proportionally higher in cities with enforced residency laws, but this is not the case.

In summary, while the proportion of blacks in a city's workforce is related to black employment levels, a pure labor-market explanation is inadequate to explain black employment growth.

Federal Aid

Real per capita spending by local governments climbed steadily from the beginning of the Great Society in 1965 until the midpoint of the next decade, reflecting, in part, a vast increase in federally funded programs implemented by city hall. After 1975, however, real spending began to decline (Peterson 1982, pp. 160-162). This pattern can be attributed, in part, to the spate of tax and spending limitations passed by state legislatures in these years, but another contributing factor was the fall-off in federal assistance.

Two different indicators of federal aid trends have been employed for this study: changes in per capita local receipts of federal funds from 1973 to 1980, and changes in the level of dependence on Washington, where dependence is measured as the percentage of local revenue derived from federal assistance.

Federal aid followed a curvilinear pattern in the 1970s. Measured both as a percentage of federal outlays and as a percentage of state and local expenditures, federal assistance to lower-level governments reached a peak in 1978 (Reischauer 1981, p. 34) and began to decline thereafter. This trend is reflected among the 40 cities in the study sample: in 33 cities the percentage of local revenues that came from Washington increased between 1973 and 1978, but between 1978 and 1980 federal aid as a percentage of local revenues declined in 23 cities.

It was suggested earlier that local public employment will fluctuate with intergovernmental assistance and that black employment will grow or decline accordingly. This is to say, we expect that the stimulative effects of federal aid will expand job opportunities for blacks, and that a decline of intergovernmental assistance will shrink opportunities.

In the 40 city sample, increases in federal aid, particularly measured in per capita terms, are indeed associated with an expanding public-sector workforce at the local level: per capita federal aid increases over the 1973-80 period are correlated with increases in the number of public employees at the .33 level ($p < .05$). Federal aid increases did in fact result in higher total per capita local revenues (that is to say, federal aid was not used to substitute for local tax dollars), and a strong correlation of .55 ($p < .001$) can be seen in the two variables. Growth in local total per capita revenue also correlates with public-sector growth at the .43 level ($p < .01$).

Table 6, however, shows the effects of federal aid on black employment. In both per capita and percentage terms, increases in federal aid are to a modest extent associated with negative or slow growth of black employment, measured as the percentage share of the workforce. Relationships of federal-aid growth to fair-share gains are weaker, and they hardly suggest that federal grants stimulate black employment. A regression analysis (see Table 10) shows that when other variables are held constant, there are clear negative associations between the growth rates of federal aid and black employment, however these two factors are measured.

This is surprising, particularly in light of the expectation nurtured during the Great Society years that federal spending specifically helped minorities by creating public-sector jobs. The pattern in the data, however, may not be inconsistent with this supposition.

Table 6. Correlations between state and federal intergovernmental aid and black employment, 1973-1980.

	Growth in federal aid		Growth in state aid	
	Per capita	As percentage of local revenues	Per capita	As percentage of local revenues
Change in percentage of blacks, 1973-80				
Total workforce	-.11	-.17	-.05	.21
Administrators	-.14	-.28*	.11	.41**
Professionals	-.11	-.40**	.35**	.55***
Change in fair-share effort score, 1973-80				
Total workforce	-.01	.14	-.18	-.02
Administrators	.03	.20	-.04	.03
Professionals	.05	.21	-.07	.27*

	1980 federal aid		1980 state aid	
	Per capita	Percent of local revenues	Per capita	Percent of local revenues
Percentage of blacks, 1980				
Total workforce	.19	.33*	-.13	.04
Administrators	.30**	.54***	-.12	.06
Professionals	.30**	.39**	.02	.18

Note: Coefficients are Pearson r.

*** $p < .001$
** $p < .01$
* $p < .05$

Let us begin by noting the relatively strong relationships between federal aid and black employment as static variables (see Table 6, part C). While increases in federal aid in the 1970s did not produce increases in black employment, there nevertheless appears to have been some stimulative effect at an earlier time. What seems to have happened is that federal aid went disproportionately to needy cities in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These federal monies created additional city jobs just at a time when affirmative action doctrines and black political power were emerging in heavily black cities. The convergence of these political forces and the availability of federally supported or federally mandated jobs opened the public sector to blacks. This situation accounts for the high level of relationship between the variables in part C of Table 6.

These relatively distressed or needy cities, however, are not settings conducive to high growth of black municipal employment. Growth of black jobs--especially when measured in terms of changes in fair-share ratios, but perhaps also when measured in terms of changes in percentage of the workforce (see Table 10)--occur in growing, relatively healthy cities. City by city inspection of the data on federal aid and population growth show that, to some degree, the largest increases in federal aid in the 1970s were granted to needy cities. The pattern is not striking, for the 1970s saw a distinct equalizing trend in the distribution of federal aid among cities, but there still remained some modest tendency to allocate more assistance to needy cities. For example, of the 20 cities that experienced growth in per capita federal aid above the median rate, 13 (65 percent) were population losers. The same pattern obtains when we examine the array of cities above and below the median increase in dependency levels (most but not all of the cities on the high side of the median per capita increase are also on the high side of the median increase in dependency).

The patterns described here are, to be sure, not extremely strong. Nevertheless, they do permit the conclusion that federal aid generally grew most in those cities where weak or deteriorating economies prevented high rates of black employment growth. They also explain the negative relationships (weak in the bivariate correlations but somewhat stronger in the later regressions) between federal aid increases and black public employment growth.

State Aid to Local Governments

Although state grants to local governments produce stimulative effects similar to those of federal assistance (state

per capita aid increases and public-sector growth are related at the .26 level, $p < .05$), their effects on black employment appear to be somewhat different. While growth in federal aid during the 1970s is associated with slow or negative growth in the proportion of blacks on municipal payrolls, growth of state aid is positively associated with the growth of black managerial and professional employment, measured both as a percentage of such jobs and in terms of fair-share effort.

It is not clear why state aid and the growth of high-level black jobs should be so strongly related, nor indeed why that relationship is more significant than that between federal aid and black jobs. The most likely area in which black managerial and professional employment would have increased during the 1970s was the field of public education, for which, in fact, most state aid to local governments is earmarked. Unfortunately, the data used here include neither state education aid, most of which goes to school districts rather than to city governments, nor education personnel. An inspection of trends in state intergovernmental aid over the decade, as reflected in the annual Census Bureau document City Government Finances, provides no clues. Perhaps the most likely explanation--though not an entirely satisfactory one--lies in the recent growth of state shared revenue programs and the emergence of state concern for urban problems (ACIR 1979).

Regression analysis confirms that increases in state aid, like increases in federal aid, are negatively associated with black total municipal employment growth. The regressions also show the strong positive relationship between state assistance and job growth at the professional and managerial levels.

State aid appears to have grown most sharply in needy cities. High growth, for example, appears to be related to high hardship scores among the 24 cities for which we have data ($r = .33$, $p < .05$). Dependence on state aid and per capita state grants grew along with the black populations of these cities ($r = .50$, $p < .001$ and .24, respectively). In short, state aid, like federal aid, grew fastest in cities where the situation was not conducive to high rates of black job growth.

Black Political Power

Significant black political achievement in some cities raises the question whether such power has been or can be used to create employment opportunities for blacks. Of the 40 cities in our sample, 9 had black mayors at the end of the decade. Eight of these, however, were among the 23 cities that lost population

during the 1970s; only Los Angeles, among the 17 growing cities, had a black mayor in 1979.

Now, the greatest concentration of black municipal workers occurs in heavily black cities with deteriorating economies. We have seen, however, that in such cities the competition among blacks in the labor market is sharper than in growing cities. In heavily black cities the percentage of municipal jobs that are filled by blacks may be relatively high, but it is generally not high enough to match their share of the local population. Theoretically, then, more blacks are competing for each city job in these localities than in economically healthy places.

Are patterns of black municipal employment more favorable in those declining cities with black mayors than in those without? How do black employment opportunities in declining cities led by black chief executives compare to those in growing cities, where blacks seem to be employed in reasonably large numbers in relation to their population but do not control city hall?

I have already suggested that, despite the almost universal practice of hiring municipal employees according to a merit system, the potential for mayoral influence in the personnel administration process should not be underestimated. Besides establishing meaningful affirmative action programs and appointing sympathetic administrators to key personnel positions, a mayor can use city hall as a visible forum from which to exercise moral leadership on matters of racial equity.

The apparent power of black mayors in the personnel process is evident in the statistics presented below. Consider first the array of bivariate relationships between the presence of a black mayor and the black employment variables (Table 7). Despite the fact that a black mayor is associated with high population loss ($r = -.16$), a black chief executive is associated not only with increasing percentages of black workers, as one would expect, but also with increasing fair-share effort scores. The coefficients between the presence of a black mayor and black employment change are generally robust.

The growth of black employment in black-mayor cities is not a function of a rapidly increasing black population. The presence of a black mayor is in fact negatively related to black population increases over the course of the 1970s ($r = -.20$).

It is possible, of course, that black power can be brought to bear on the personnel process through means other than the mayoralty. In an earlier paper using essentially the same data (with the exception of the figures from 1980), I correlated black city-council representation with changes in the percent black on the workforce between 1973 and 1978 (Eisinger 1982). Council representation was measured as a ratio of percent black on the

Table 7. Correlation between black municipal employment and the presence of a black mayor.

	Cities with black mayors in office, 1979
Percentage of blacks, 1980	
Total workforce	.49***
Administrators	.56***
Professionals	.60***
Change in percentage of blacks, 1973-80	
Total workforce	.58***
Administrators	.54***
Professionals	.35
Change in fair-share effort score, 1973-80	
Total workforce	.35**
Administrators	.17
Professionals	.12

Note: Coefficients are Pearson r.

*** $p < .001$
** $p < .01$
* $p < .05$

council to percent black in the city population. Increase in the black proportion in the total workforce was not related significantly (r = .03) to the degree of black representation on the council, although growth in the percentage of black administrative and professional workers was associated moderately with black city council strength (r = .16 and .21, respectively). In general, however, personnel matters appear to be an executive rather than a legislative function in municipalities.

A more vivid picture of the impact of a black mayor on employment opportunities emerges from the data in Table 8. The sample cities were divided into three groups: 8 cities with black mayors that lost population during the 1970s, 15 cities without black mayors that lost population, and 16 cities without black mayors that grew between 1970 and 1980. Only one city, Los Angeles, grew and had a black mayor; since it was the only city in this category, it has been eliminated from the analysis that follows.

The profile of the cities with black mayors resembles to some extent that of the larger group of declining cities. The two groups of declining cities had average population losses of similar dimensions. The 8 black-led cities had a higher mean unemployment rate. Both groups experienced public-sector contraction during a period when growing cities were experiencing substantial growth of municipal employment. The black-led cities had on the average a much higher percentage of black residents (55.1) than did the other two groups (28.1 and 28.4 percent).

In terms of opportunities for black employment, however, the cities with black mayors and the growing cities are far closer together. The black-led cities in particular seem to have created and sustained opportunities for black employment, despite the distressed economic conditions associated with population loss.

Table 8 shows first of all that the actual number of jobs held by blacks grew substantially in black-led cities between 1973 and 1980. Blacks gained an average of more than 800 jobs in these cities, during a period when the public workforces in the cities were shrinking. This increase in jobs contrasts with a smaller average black gain of just under 400 jobs in the growing cities (growth which the previous analysis would lead one to expect) and an average loss by blacks of 50 jobs in declining cities without black mayors.

Although it would have been possible to predict the increases in the percent black of the total municipal workforce and in the two special occupational categories, the analysis to this point would not have led us to expect the large fair-share effort score gains in the cities with black mayors. Population

Table 8. Black mayors, population trends, and black municipal employment.

	Cities with black mayors that lost population (n=8)	Cities without black mayors that lost population (n=15)	Cities without black mayors that gained population (n=16)
Average population change, 1970-80	-11.4%	-12.9%	17.4%
Average unemployment,1979	9.1%	6.3%	4.2%
Average change in size of public-sector workforce, 1973-80	- 3.0%	- 9.0%	12.6%
Average number of black jobs added, 1973-80	826	-50	386
Average change in percentage black on city workforce, 1973-80*	16.0	1.9	6.9
Average change in black fair-share effort score, 1973-80*	12.4	-11.3	- 3.3
Average change in percentage of black administrators, 1973-80*	19.9	2.2	5.6
Average change in fair-share effort score for black administrators, 1973-80*	28.8	9.7	18.5
Average change in percentage of black professionals, 1973-80*	17.7	6.6	4.9
Average change in fair-share effort score for black professionals, 1973-80*	20.6	16.2	13.5

* Figures are in percentage points.

loss, after all, is associated generally with decline in fair-share effort. Fair-share gains in black-led cities, however, averaged over 12 points--and during a period in which black workers almost everywhere else were losing ground. The high relative growth of the fair-share score for administrators in particular (28.8 points, on the average) suggests that mayoral influence was focused on expanding opportunities for blacks in city jobs that carry authority and influence.

Compared to the cities without black mayors that lost population, the growing cities, almost all of which are located in the South and Southwest, can still be regarded as relatively open opportunity settings for black public workers. In these cities black employment growth, measured in percentage of fair-share terms, outstrips that in all declining cities, except in the professional category.

The receptivity of cities with black mayors to black workers is demonstrated in several additional ways, as Table 9 shows. An analysis of nationally aggregated data on black municipal employment in 1979 found that black workers--especially professionals and administrators--tended to be concentrated in certain departments and underrepresented in others (Herbert 1982). Black workers were most likely to be found in agencies that serve heavily black clienteles, such as housing, welfare, and public health. They were least likely to work in fire and police departments and financial administration.

For the present study, I examined patterns of black employment in financial administration in the sample cities. Financial administration was chosen not only because of its traditionally low black representation but also because of its relatively high number of professional jobs. The figures that appear in the first two lines of Table 9 are ratios of the percentage of black workers in the financial administration departments to the percentage of black workers in the municipal workforces. A score of 1.00 signifies that blacks are represented in financial administration exactly in proportion to their presence on the city payrolls. A figure lower than 1.00 means that they are underrepresented, the outcome that national patterns would predict.

As the data show, black workers in cities with black mayors are equitably represented in financial administration; they are slightly underrepresented in that function in the other two groups of cities. Black professionals and administrators are overrepresented in black-led cities and in growing cities but very slightly underrepresented in declining cities that do not have black mayors. In general, then, opportunities for blacks in financial administration are better by a narrow margin under black mayors.

Table 9. Black mayors and the status of black municipal employees, 1980.

	Declining cities with black mayors	Declining cities without black mayors	Growing cities without black mayors
Ratio of percentage of blacks in financial administration department to percentage of blacks in total workforce	1.00	.89	.87
Ratio of percentage of black professionals and administrators in financial administration to percentage of black professionals and administrators in the total workforce	1.12	.97	1.17
Ratio of percentage of blacks to percentage of whites earning more than $16,000	.510	.436	.238
Ratio of percentage of blacks to percentage of whites earning more than $25,000	.250	.282	.172

Black mayors also seem to have an effect on the pay scale of city workers. On the average, black municipal workers are paid less than white municipal workers (U.S. EEOC 1980). The degree to which this disparity reflects the concentration of black workers in low-level jobs and differences in seniority, rather than discrimination, is not entirely clear. What is apparent is that the income gap between whites and blacks is smaller, generally, in black-mayor cities than in the others.

Figures in the last two lines in Table 9 are ratios of the percentage of blacks to the percentage of whites above two different earnings thresholds. At the high end of the salary scale--over $25,000 per year in 1980--the gap is still extremely large. The percentage of black workers earning this relatively high salary was much smaller than the percentage of whites who did. The midwestern and eastern cities without black mayors had the smallest gap, but even a ratio of .282 indicates that more than three times as many black employees than at present would have to earn over $25,000 to achieve a pay distribution at the high end similar to that of whites. Black-led cities have a slightly larger disparity at this level than do the declining cities without black mayors.

At the lower salary threshold--$16,000 per year or more--cities with black mayors display the highest ratio, although even here the number of black workers at or above this pay level would have to be doubled for the earnings distribution to match that of whites. The data provide graphic evidence of the degree to which black municipal workers are concentrated in low pay grades relative to their white colleagues.

6. A REGRESSION ANALYSIS

In order to explore the strength of the bivariate relationships when other factors are controlled, and in order to sort out the relative importance of the independent variables as they affect black employment, a number of multiple regression models were run. Table 10 presents two of these models, one a regression on change in the percent black in the total municipal workforce and the other a regression on change in the fair-share effort score. The choice of independent variables in these models was dictated by a desire not only to test the relative strength of each of the hypotheses but also to explain the greatest degree of variance in the dependent variables. Variables included in the early trial runs that registered no effects on the dependent variable--i.e., that not only had low beta coefficients but also made no contribution to the R2--were eliminated. These included city size, sunbelt location, and growth of federal and state dependence (although the latter was a significant factor in explaining the growth of black professional jobs). With only a few exceptions, the outcomes of the regressions in which changes in the total workforce serve as the dependent variable are similar to the outcomes of regressions in which changes in the administrator and professional categories are the dependent variables.

The signs on several of the coefficients are different from those we found in the bivariate analysis, but the changes are relatively minor. Growth of city population, for example, has a very small positive relationship with growth in the percent black in the workforce, whereas in the correlation analysis the sign on the small coefficient was negative. Yet, the basic conclusion of the earlier analysis still holds: population growth is much more important in explaining growth in fair-share effort score than it is in explaining growth in the percentage of black employees.

In the regressions, growth of the public sector, negatively related at a statistically insignificant level in the bivariate analysis to growth in percent black in the total workforce, is

Table 10. Multiple regression analysis of black employment growth.

Independent variables	Dependent variables: Change in percent black, total workforce, 1973-80 (R^2 = .63)	Dependent variables: Change in fair-share effort score, total workforce, 1973-80 (R^2 = .53)
Percent black 1980	.652**	.196
Growth of black population, 1970-80	-.005	-.558**
Growth of city population, 1970-80	.108	.698**
Black mayor, 1979	.292*	.350*
Growth of public sector workforce, 1973-80	.096	.010
Growth of per capita revenue, 1973-80	.330*	.381*
Growth of per capita federal aid, 1973-80	-.201	-.231
Growth of per capita state aid, 1973-80	-.352**	-.298*

Note: Coefficients are betas.

** $p < .01$
* $p < .05$

barely positive. The regressions on administrative and professional changes, however, produce, negative coefficients, consistent with what we found earlier.

Aside from the minor inconsistencies, the signs of the beta coefficients and the bivariate correlation coefficients are the same. On balance, the basic interpretations of the data to this point can be sustained, even when the independent variables are subjected to controls. Let us review the most important of these findings.

1. Blacks are clearly more likely to command a fair share of city jobs in growing cities. When all else is held constant, it appears that even the percentage of jobs held by blacks is likely to be very slightly greater in growing rather than in declining cities. The important and unambiguous effects of population growth, however, are felt mainly on the fair-share index.

2. Blacks also do better where per capita local revenues are increasing. This is especially true for the fair-share effort index. Since growth of federal and state per capita aid is negatively related to growth of black employment in the regressions, growth of local revenue must be a function here of tax collections generated by a healthy local economy.

3. A black mayor is clearly significant in explaining black employment growth. The black mayor variable is significant in both models, even with black population controlled.

4. A large black population is also associated with large percentage increases in black employment and, to a considerably lesser extent, with fair-share increases.

5. There is a negative relationship (though not at a statistically significant level) between intergovernmental aid and black employment growth.

The first two points support the argument that black workers seeking employment in the municipal public sector will do better in places experiencing relatively good economic times. This conclusion is supported by the fifth point. We have already explained the negative relationship between intergovernmental aid and black employment growth as the consequence of a modest residual targeting effort to direct aid to the most needy cities. These places, however, offer the least hospitable economic setting for black employment growth.

The third and fourth points both suggest apparent political explanations for black employment growth. The third point emphasizes the influence of the black mayor, which, though not the most important variable, is clear in both regressions. It is more difficult to explain politically the association, asserted in the fourth point, between a large black population and increases in the percent black of the city workforce. We can say, however, that large black populations represent potential voting blocs. The presence of such blocs creates incentives for local chief executives, black or white, to court votes by pursuing policies, such as affirmative action, with a clear racial interest. Freeman's (1976) study of the influence of black voting at the state level on black public employment levels lends credence to the interpretation of black population variables as indicators of voting strength.

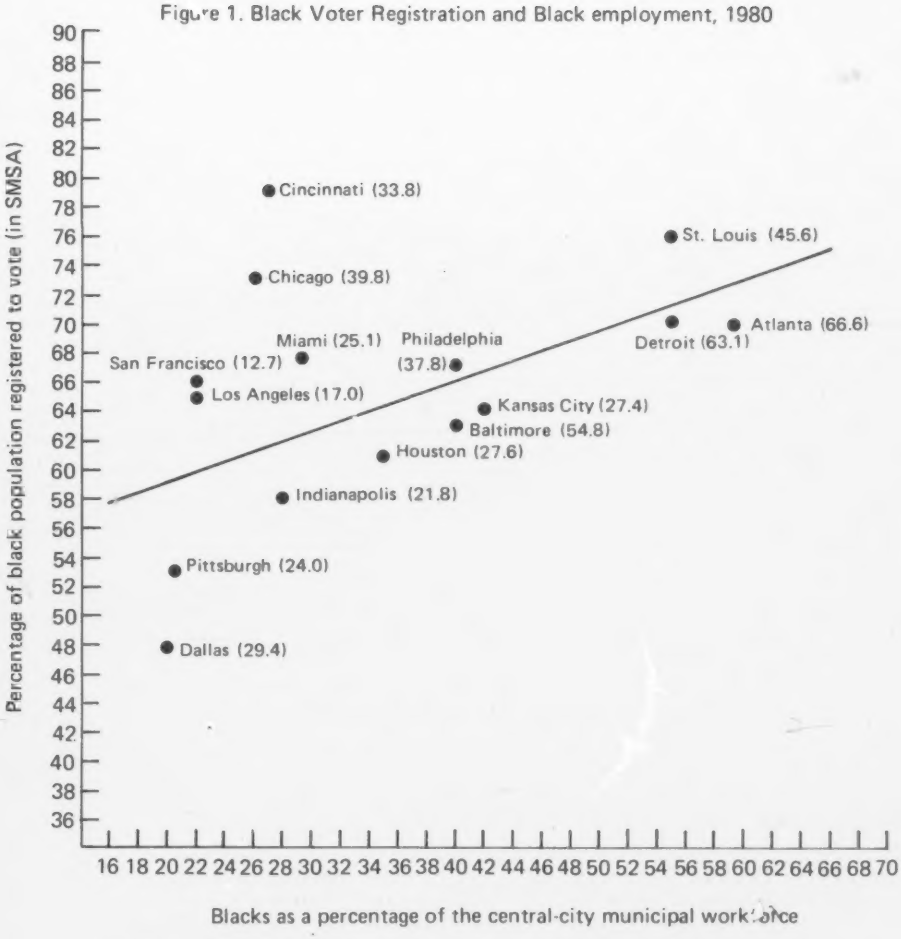
It is difficult, unfortunately, to test the actual effects of black voting, for statistics on registration and turnout by race are not easy to acquire. The U.S. Census Bureau does, however, monitor black registration in selected metropolitan areas, a few of which are included in the present sample. In the scattergram presented in the Figure, black voter registration in 1980 is arrayed against the percent black in the workforce in 1980. The pattern suggests a general, positive association.

An alternative explanation for the strong association between a large black population and large share of city jobs is the labor-market explanation reviewed above. It asserts that municipal employers will tend to draw on the available labor pool no matter what its racial composition. If this hypothesis is correct, then changes in the composition of city workforces will more or less mirror changes in the demographics of the labor pool.

No doubt there is some validity to the labor-market idea, since the greater the black presence in the labor pool, the larger the percentage of jobs blacks hold. This is probably true especially at the unskilled and semi-skilled levels. Here the need of the city for a pool of workers with minimal qualifications is matched by the relatively greater availability of such workers in the black segment of the labor pool. It is worth repeating, however, that we should be extremely cautious in assuming that black employment levels and employment gains are products of labor-market factors alone.

For one thing, black workers are still severely underrepresented in the higher-level occupations. If the labor-market thesis explained the level of black employment in these occupations, then either we should find no underrepresentation at all or we should find that the labor pool from which such positions are filled is deficient in some way. The most obvious possible

Figure 1. Black Voter Registration and Black employment, 1980



NOTE: Figures in parentheses are the percentages of blacks in the city population.

SOURCE: Registration data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Voting and Registration in the Election of November, 1980* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, April 1982), p. 33.

deficiency would be lack of education: not enough educated blacks in the labor pool to produce proportional representation. But there is no relationship between the educational achievements of the black community and black employment in professional and administrative jobs. If black access to such jobs does not vary according to the qualifications extant in the labor pool, then other factors must be considered. I would argue that underrepresentation is the product of historical patterns of discrimination and that blacks approach parity with whites at least in part through the use of political power. The difficulty blacks have had in gaining jobs in preferred occupations--except where political pressure or litigation has opened the way--should deter us from relying too heavily on simple labor-market explanations for black employment levels.

One further factor that casts doubts on such an explanation is that the growth of black population in a city does not tend to increase the black share of city jobs. That is, the composition of the labor force does not change with shifts in the composition of the labor pool.

We may conclude, then, that growth in black city jobs is certainly in part a function of black executive power and very likely a response, in addition, to black voting strength. In the absence of black political power, black employment opportunities are greater in cities with healthy economies.

7. CONCLUSION

In many places, black Americans made remarkable gains in municipal employment during the last decade. Treating employment trends in the aggregate obscures the striking transformations made in some cities, many of them located in the old South. It is worth a moment, then, to return to Table 2. Here we see that in the space of less than a decade the number of black professionals in Norfolk grew to nearly perfect proportionality from a baseline of next to nothing. Black workers achieved a nearly perfect fair-share in New Orleans, increasing their numbers by two-thirds. In Little Rock, there was a dramatic gain in the number of black administrators, and there was a similar gain in Oakland. But nothing equals the change that occurred in Oklahoma City, where the black administrator fair-share score went from a mere 2 in 1973 to 129 in 1980.

Toledo, Beaumont, and Memphis hired substantial numbers of black professionals in the 1970s; those cities had merely token representation of blacks in 1973. Austin, Hartford, Miami, and Raleigh did the same for blacks at the administrator level.

It is true that in the aggregate blacks lost a small amount of ground over the decade, when trends in black representation in the total workforce are considered in relation to black urban population increases. In individual cities and in the select occupational categories, however, progress in municipal employment was steady and in some cases dramatic.

Satisfaction at these trends must nevertheless be tempered by several observations. First of all, despite much progress, blacks are still seriously underrepresented in all but a handful of cities in administrative and professional occupations. The number of black-held jobs at these higher levels would have to double immediately for proportional representation to be achieved. Even more sobering is the fact that the salary structures for blacks and whites are substantially different. This is true even in those cities where blacks have achieved their fair share of high-level

jobs. In Berkeley, for example, where blacks are greatly overrepresented among both administrators and professionals, the proportion of whites earning more than $25,000 per year in 1980 was nearly four times greater than the proportion of blacks earning that amount. In Birmingham, where great strides were made in hiring blacks, particularly after the election of Mayor Richard Arrington, less than 4 percent of the black workforce earned more than $16,000 per year in 1980, though nearly half the white employees earned that much. Although these differences may be expected to shrink as black workers gain more seniority, the fact is that progress in obtaining high-level job titles has come more swiftly than has progress in winning high-level salaries.

A second general observation has to do with the role of the local public sector in contributing to patterns of social mobility in the black community. Trends in municipal employment appear to be microcosms of larger employment patterns in the black population at large. Just as the most striking employment gains in city work have occurred at the professional and managerial levels in the last decade, so too are gains occurring nationally at those levels for blacks across the entire employment spectrum. The 1981 National Urban League report on The State of Black America (1981) shows that the largest increases in black employment between 1975 and 1980 came in these high-level occupations. The proportion of blacks in low-level jobs decreased nationally, just as it did in the municipal public sector.

The increasing professionalization of the black municipal workforce appears to be part of the general formation of a larger black middle class, whose emergence apparently accelerated in the 1970s.

At the same time, some observers have worried that the emergence of a black middle class has left intact the great mass of black poor. Some scholars speak of a growing class bifurcation in the black community, a widening of the income gap between the black middle and lower classes (Wilson 1980, p. 134). Indeed, data from 1978 show a widening process under way: the two-fifths of black families with the lowest incomes commanded a smaller percentage of total black income in 1978 than they had in 1968, while over the same period the share of income of the upper two-fifths of black families increased (p. 172).

Others claim the gap is not widening, arguing that neither the proportion of black families below the poverty line or the proportion above it changed much at all during the 1970s (National Urban League 1981, pp. 34-35). Nevertheless, the fact remains that the black "underclass," the poor and chronically under- and unemployed had grown numerically by the end of the 1970s (p.32).

To some degree trends in black employment in city government reproduce and contribute to these patterns. On the one hand, opportunities for white-collar work for blacks have expanded rapidly; but on the other hand, jobs for the unskilled and semi-skilled have diminished in number. Among black workers, the costs of local public-sector contraction or stabilization are being borne primarily by those with few skills. Those displaced are not, of course, workers who can easily find other employment, particularly in a depressed economy. The local public sector, then, by providing opportunities for some blacks and by reducing employment for others, contributes to economic class divisions in the black community.

Yet this role must be weighed against the contribution of the local public sector to the emergence of a solid black middle class. The future of the black community as a whole lies with this latter group. It is within the middle class that the resources necessary for collective advancement are being generated. Whether or not those resources will be turned substantially to collective purposes, and whether or not members of the black middle class who owe their rise to employment in the public sector will play leadership roles in their communities, are questions that remain to be explored.

One final observation has to do with the increasingly common view that city governments are relatively powerless entities in the face of great external forces emanating from Washington, state capitals, and the more general economy. The argument is made particularly in discussions of economic policy, where local government, except for its role as promoter of private investment, is considered virtually irrelevant. As a result, the capture of city hall is often seen as no more than a symbolic achievement, hardly worth the paper on which the mayor's oath of office is written.

While it is certainly true that cities and their well-being are greatly influenced by decisions over which their governments exercise little or no control, it does not follow that municipal government is powerless in the face of the great issues of economic want, the maldistribution of income, or unemployment. City governments cannot solve these problems, but they can in a modest way contribute to their alleviation.

That black mayors have been able to increase greatly the number of blacks on city payrolls, even in hard times--thereby converting political power into economic benefits--is proof enough of that proposition.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLING AND RESPONSE RATE

This study began with a list of the 57 cities whose 1970 populations were greater than 250,000. From this list, New York, Honolulu, and Washington, D.C., were eliminated for their unique size, governmental characteristics, or ethnic composition, and the remaining 54 cities were sent requests for affirmative action data. The first efforts to collect data for 1973 and 1978 began in the summer of 1979. Data collection for 1980 began in the winter of 1980-81 and continued through the following spring. Of the 54 cities, 41 sent usable data at least for the year 1980, a response rate of 76 percent. Fifteen of these cities either failed to provide data for one of the earlier years or had black populations of less than 10 percent, the racial composition threshold subsequently established. This left 26 large cities in the final analysis.

A supplementary random sample (approximately 1 in 3) of cities with populations between 50,000 and 249,999 was drawn at the time the large-city group was selected. This produced a list of 78 cities, of which 44 provided some data, for a response rate of 56 percent. Of these 44 smaller cities, however, most had very small black populations, leaving only 14 to be added to the group of larger cities.

APPENDIX B: CITIES IN THE SAMPLE

City, State	Total population, 1980	1970-1980 % change	% black population, 1980
Akron, OH	237,177	-13.9	22
Atlanta, GA*	425,022	-14.1	67
Austin, TX	345,496	36.3	12
Beaumont, TX	118,102	0.5	37
Berkeley, CA*	103,328	- 9.4	20
Birmingham, AL*	284,413	- 5.5	56
Bridgeport, CT	142,546	- 8.9	21
Charlotte, NC	314,447	30.2	31
Chicago, IL	3,005,072	-10.8	40
Cincinnati, OH	385,457	-15.0	34
Columbus, GA	169,441	9.3	34
Columbus, OH	564,871	4.6	22
Dallas, TX	904,078	7.1	29
Detroit, MI*	1,203,339	-20.5	63
Durham, NC	100,831	5.7	47
E. St. Louis, IL*	55,200	-21.3	96
Hampton, VA	122,617	1.5	34
Hartford, CT	136,392	-13.7	34
Houston, TX	1,595,138	29.2	28
Indianapolis, IN	700,807	- 4.9	22
Kansas City, MO	448,159	-11.7	27
Little Rock, AR	158,461	19.6	32
Los Angeles, CA*	2,966,850	5.5	17
Memphis, TN	646,356	3.6	48
Miami, FL	346,865	3.6	25
Milwaukee, WI	636,212	-11.3	23
New Orleans, LA*	557,515	- 6.1	55
Norfolk, VA	266,979	-13.3	35
Oakland, CA*	339,337	- 6.2	47
Oklahoma City, OK	403,213	9.5	15
Philadelphia, PA	1,688,210	-13.4	38
Pittsburgh, PA	423,938	-18.5	24
Pontiac, MI*	76,715	-10.0	37
Raleigh, NC	150,255	21.9	27
Rochester, NY	241,741	-18.1	26
St. Louis, MO	453,085	-27.2	46
San Francisco, CA	678,974	- 5.1	13
Toledo, OH	354,635	- 7.4	17
Tulsa, OK	360,919	9.3	12
Waco, TX	101,261	6.2	22

* Had a black mayor in 1979.

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